

Strawberry

History

Wild strawberries have been growing in Italy since 235 B.C. It is unknown when they started growing in North America, but when European settlers landed in Virginia in 1588, they discovered strawberries growing. Massachusetts settlers ate strawberries grown by American Indians as early as 1643.

In 1714, a French naval officer found a flowering strawberry plant in Chile. The plant was sent to a French horticulture center where the plant crossed with a North American strawberry plant. The result was a much larger berry than those grown elsewhere. Today's berries can be traced back to these plants.

Strawberries spread to California, and by the early 1900s were being grown on a large scale. Today, over 30,000 acres are planted in California each year which results in around one billion pounds of strawberries each year. Overall, California provides 80 percent of all the strawberries grown in the United States.

A Historical Dessert

The American Indians were using strawberries in many ways prior to the colonization of America. One dish consisted of mixing crushed berries and cornmeal then baking into strawberry bread. The colonists adapted this recipe and strawberry shortcake was created.



Fun Facts

- Each strawberry has approximately 200 little seeds
- Strawberries are the most popular berry
- Strawberries are grown in every US state and Canadian province
- Strawberries technically are not berries- their seeds are on the outside
- There are over 600 varieties of strawberries
- The flavor of a strawberry is largely influenced by weather conditions
- During the time of Emperor Napoleon's rule, Madame Tallien bathed in juice of fresh strawberries- she used 22 pounds per bath
- Strawberries were the symbol of Venus, the Roman goddess of love, because of its heart shape and red color



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